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Barbados Handbook

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W A R N I N G

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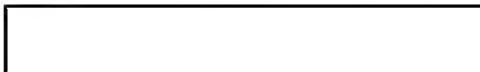
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INTRODUCTION

Barbados, the most easterly of the West Indian islands, was a British colony from its discovery in the early part of the seventeenth century until 30 November 1966, when it became an independent sovereign state and a member of the British Commonwealth of Nations. The advance to its present enjoyment of responsible government has been steady, and, next to the British House of Commons and the Bermuda House of Assembly, its House of Assembly is the oldest in the Commonwealth. Barbados joined the West Indies Federation when it was formed in January 1958, and remained a member until May 1962. Barbados became the 122nd member of the United Nations Organization on 10 December 1966. It was admitted to the Organization of American States in 1967.

The island was originally populated by Arawak Indians, migrants from the South American mainland. The population of about 257,000 is predominantly of Negro, white, and mixed racial stock, with a very small number of East Indians. In earlier times the island had a sizable white population, including many indentured servants. At present 5 percent of the population is white and about 15 percent mixed.

The Anglican Church is the established church with an estimated membership of 25,000 and maintains a church in every parish. Places of worship of other Christian denominations include a Roman Catholic cathedral, three Catholic churches, and several Methodist chapels.

Political life in Barbados has been dominated since 1961 by Errol W. Barrow, prime minister and leader of the Democratic Labor Party. The country has a fairly strong economy, bolstered by increasing receipts from tourism that supplement the stagnant export earnings of the sugar industry. Prospects for continued political stability are good. Racial friction has been minimal, even though the small white minority controls much of the land and commercial life. The few extreme leftists do not pose a significant threat to the government's small but effective security force.

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I. GEOGRAPHY

Location and area

Barbados, located approximately 150 nautical miles northeast of Trinidad, is the most easterly island of the Lesser Antilles. The island is flanked by the Caribbean Sea on the west and the Atlantic Ocean on the east. Bridgetown, the capital and largest city, is approximately 1,500 nautical miles from the southern tip of Florida, 1,350 nautical miles from Havana, and 550 nautical miles east of the major oil fields of Venezuela.

Barbados is a small, roughly triangular-shaped island of about 166 square miles in area. It is about 21 miles long from northwest to southeast and widest in the south, where it reaches a maximum width of about 14 miles.

Topography

The topography of Barbados is characterized by flat or gently sloping terraced plains rising from sea level to a maximum elevation of 1,115 feet in the north-central portion of the island. The plains are separated by many nearly continuous, steep escarpments that generally parallel the coasts. Low hills occupy a small, roughly semicircular area along the northeast coast. Numerous small streams drain the northern half of the island. Although the island is extensively cultivated, the soil seldom reaches a thickness of more than three feet over bedrock of predominantly coralline limestone. Soil thickness of one foot or less is common.

Climate

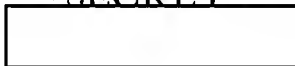
The island has a maritime tropical climate characterized by uniformly high temperatures and relatively high humidity throughout the year and by distinct rainy and dry seasons. Generally, the rainy season is from June through November, when more than four inches of rainfall occurs monthly. During the rainy season, easterly winds are fairly frequent and bring increased cloudiness and thunderstorm activity. There are intervening periods of fair weather with good visibility. About once a year tropical cyclones develop in these easterlies and bring extensive cloudiness, heavy rainfall, severe thunderstorms, and strong winds. During the dry season, February through April, the weather is usually good; there are scattered light showers, but few thunderstorms and fairly good visibility.

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Natural resources

Natural resources consist mainly of the land and small natural gas deposits plus beaches which have made the island a great tourist attraction. There are no forests on Barbados. About 70% of the agricultural land is devoted to sugar cane.

Human resources

The estimated population is 257,000, with a density of about 1,524 persons per square mile. The population is relatively homogeneous. About 80% are descendants of African slaves; 5% are whites; and the remainder are Euro-African mixed bloods. Despite emigration and one of the lowest birth rates in the West Indies—less than 1% annually—the population continues to climb slowly. Approximately one third of the population resides in Bridgetown, and estimates of the density in this area range from 10,000 to 20,000 per square mile.

The estimated labor force in October 1966 was 90,100 or about 63% of the population age 15 and over. In 1966 males made up 59% of the labor force. About 86% of the male population 15 years of age and over was in the labor force, as compared with 46% for females. Literacy is estimated at more than 90%, but few of those with a primary education manage to get secondary training.



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ECONOMIC
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II. ECONOMIC BACKGROUND

Growth rates and trends

Barbados is essentially a sugar producer and tourist attraction. Growth rates for total output and export earnings fluctuate considerably, depending on world prices for sugar. For example, gross domestic product (GDP) increased 14% (in current prices) in 1963 largely because of record sugar prices, but it dropped to 3-4% in 1964 when prices weakened. During the period 1961-69 the growth rate averaged 8% annually in current prices but only 3-4% in real terms. In 1969 per capita GDP was estimated to be US\$450. Barbados faces serious problems in maintaining a reasonable economic growth rate because of its dependence on sugar.

Government economic policy

Economic policy is focused on accelerating over-all development. The government has prepared development plans with long-range goals for agricultural diversification and for industrialization. Public investment has been concentrated on strengthening infrastructure and creating facilities in sectors the government is promoting. Significant examples include a deep-water harbor, dairy and seafood processing plants, and tourist facilities.

Monetary and fiscal policy generally has held inflation to moderate rates. Retail prices increased by an average of only 3.5% annually during 1965-67, but rose by 9.3% in 1968 because of the devaluation of the pound sterling in November 1967. As a member of the sterling area, Barbados matched the United Kingdom's devaluation and subsequently experienced increased domestic prices for some imported goods. In 1969, increases in the cost of living returned to a more moderate level: 4.7%.

The government relies heavily on indirect taxes for its revenues but has lessened the regressive effects of these taxes by directing income to lower income groups through its education and public health expenditures. In 1967 it instituted one of the most comprehensive social welfare programs in the West Indies when it granted all employed persons social insurance providing retirement, disability, and survivors' benefits.

Sectors of the economy

Sugar cane is by far the most important crop; raw sugar output ranged from 142,000 to 212,000 metric tons during the period 1963-70. Cane now

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is grown on about 52,000 acres, three fourths of which are included in estates larger than 10 acres. Yields are usually among the highest in the Caribbean, but the 1971 total production of 135,000 tons was low because of drought conditions, and the forecasts are for an even lower total in 1972.

Production of domestic food crops—principally corn, sweet potatoes, and yams—is so small that Barbados must import most of its food. Food crops are grown chiefly by subsistence farmers. Most livestock belongs to peasant farmers and supplies products that are consumed on the farms.

The only known mineral resource is limestone, which is used in manufacturing building blocks and pottery.

Aside from sugar milling, its chief industrial activity, the very small and slowly growing manufacturing sector produces only a few nondurable consumer goods. These consist mainly of biscuits, edible oil, margarine, and soap made from imported copra. Fourteen sugar mills and three related facilities produce low-grade raw sugar as well as molasses. In order to increase efficiency, the sugar industry is being reorganized. Plans call for eventually reducing the number of mills to nine or ten.

Manufacturing output, excluding sugar and its by-products, grew little if any in the period 1963-66. Expansion has been severely restricted by limited resources, the small internal market, and low per capita purchasing power. The government has tried, however, to encourage manufacturing by offering tax relief for periods ranging from 10 to 15 years, establishing five industrial parks, and providing information and credits.

Transportation and telecommunications

The transportation and telecommunication systems serving the island of Barbados are keyed to its relatively small size and its economic activity; highways are the sole means of land transportation. Main roads are generally in good condition, with two lanes; the majority are paved. Bus transportation has an important role in tourism, which is vital to the economy. Tourism has also made civil air an important carrier, and nine foreign airlines provide regular service to the island. Inland waterways are not significant, and although Barbados has no indigenous oceangoing merchant marine, there is coastal and interisland shipping activity. Oceangoing shipping is provided by foreign carriers.

Transportation and telecommunication facilities are owned and operated by both the government and private companies. Development projects

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are mainly directed at improving highways, airfields, and the telecommunication system. The island has excellent international telecommunications. Domestic services are provided by open-wire networks supplemented by radiocommunication links.

Foreign trade

Foreign trade is highly important. Supplies of food, durable consumer goods, and capital goods depend heavily on imports. Although exports (including re-exports) equaled about 30% of the GDP in 1969, they covered only about one third of imports. Exports rose by 42% from 1958 to 1969 and imports by 126%, boosting the trade deficit to about US\$63 million in 1969.

The government relies chiefly on tariffs to influence the level and composition of imports but requires licenses for a few items. Certain products, including edible fats, some industrial equipment, and raw materials not produced on Barbados may be imported duty free. Imports from Commonwealth countries enter under preferential tariff rates. Barbados has no duties or other restrictions on exports.

The relatively large trade deficits are covered in part by earnings from tourism, which has become an increasingly important industry. In 1968 estimated foreign exchange earnings from tourism exceeded sugar exports for the first time, and in 1969 gross tourist earnings rose to \$29 million. The number of visitors staying at least one night rose an average of 18% annually from 1961 to 1969, reaching 137,600 in 1969.

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POLITICAL
SITUATION
AND TRENDS

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III. POLITICAL SITUATION AND TRENDS

Historical summary

Barbados became the world's 131st independent nation on 30 November 1966. The most easterly of the Windward and Leeward islands, Barbados evolved as the most stable of this English-speaking group. Barbados has had some form of self-rule under the British since 1636, when its first House of Assembly was established. It attained full internal autonomy in 1961. Prior to independence Barbados had become more experienced in governing itself than many other fledgling nations; it has not depended on the United Kingdom for budgetary support for many years.

Structure and functioning of the government

Barbados has one of the oldest constitutional systems in the Commonwealth, in which written conventions play an important part. The advance to full self-government was steady, and, next to the British House of Commons and the Bermuda House of Assembly, its House of Assembly is the oldest in the Commonwealth. The party system was introduced in 1946, and ministerial government began in 1954.

Barbados is a parliamentary democracy modeled on the English system. Suffrage is granted to all persons at age 18, and voting is by secret ballot. The Queen of England is the nominal chief of state, and the governor general is her representative in Barbados. The Barbadian prime minister is the head of government.

Executive authority is vested in Her Majesty and is exercised on her behalf by the governor general. The general direction and control of the government, however, rests with the Cabinet, which is collectively responsible to Parliament.

Parliament consists of the Senate and the House of Assembly. The Senate has 21 members. Twelve are appointed by the governor general on the advice of the leader of the opposition in the House of Assembly and seven by the governor general, at his discretion, to represent religious, economic, social, or other interests he considers appropriate. The House of Assembly has 24 members elected from 12 constituencies and the city of Bridgetown.

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The judiciary is headed by the Supreme Court, which consists of the Court of Appeals and the High Court. The chief justice is appointed by the governor general on the recommendation of the prime minister.

Local government for many years was effected through a method of Anglican Church administration, first established in the 17th century, in which each parish was served by a vestry, composed of the rector of the parish and a number of elected members. Under a system introduced in 1959, local government became the responsibility of district councils. It since has been transferred to a centralized governmental system.

Political dynamics

As in Trinidad and Tobago, the primary political force is the Prime Minister. Errol Barrow's leadership, however, is not as long-established or dominant in Barbados as that of Eric Williams in Trinidad and Tobago. Barrow has been the main power since he became prime minister after his party's electoral victory in 1961—a victory repeated shortly before Barbados became independent in 1966. The two major political parties are the majority Democratic Labor Party (DLP) and the Barbados Labor Party (BLP). The BLP, created in 1938, is the older.

Until 1944, political as well as economic control was in the hands of conservative white planters and merchants. In that year the predominantly white assembly reluctantly followed a recommendation by a Royal Commission, which had investigated Negro riots in the late 1930s, for extension of the voting franchise. In the 1944 elections Negroes gained a majority of the assembly seats for the first time. The extension of Negro political power in the succeeding decade was promoted mainly by Grantley Adams, the most prominent Negro leader since the late 1930s. As a radical socialist, he was active in the Barbados Progressive League (the predecessor of the BLP) and also in the labor union movement. He rose to power through attacks on the white vested interests, but as the electoral changes were secured, his views became more moderate. He retired from politics in October 1970 at the age of 72 and was succeeded as party leader by Bernard St. John, a young lawyer.

Barrow, originally a member of the BLP and a protégé of Adams, broke with Adams in 1954 as a result of personal rivalry and his belief that Adams was proceeding too slowly with social reforms. In 1955, Barrow helped to found the DLP. He was named its parliamentary leader in 1955 and became party chairman in 1960.

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Barrow's party decisively defeated the BLP in the December 1961 elections, securing 14 of 24 assembly seats. The victory was not ideological; it was attained because of the greater youth, enthusiasm, and organization of the DLP.

During the five years they were in office prior to independence and the 1966 elections, Barrow and the DLP solidified their position. Since then, because the leader of the most important labor union works closely with him, Barrow has been able to maintain relative labor peace. In addition, in sharp contrast to some other Caribbean islands, there has been little agitation from black power militants.

Recent political developments have centered on the electoral campaigns of the major political parties and various efforts to obtain electoral reforms. The most significant is the Representations of the Peoples (Amendment) Act of 1971, passed in 1971 by parliament, which revamped the electoral process and restructured the voting districts. In previous elections two candidates were elected under a double member system in each of the 12 parishes. Under the new single-member system, one man represents each of the 24 newly organized constituencies. The redefining of the constituencies induced a number of prominent political leaders, primarily from the DLP, to announce their retirement. One of these was the leader of the now defunct Barbados National Party.

The DLP's overwhelming victory in the 9 September 1971 general election demoralized the BLP, which had expected to win the election. In winning 18 of the 24 House of Assembly seats, the DLP now has the two-thirds majority required to make constitutional changes. The victory was also a personal mandate for Prime Minister Barrow and is an indication that the Barbadian populace is not desirous of "change for change's sake," as espoused by the BLP. The advent of the single-member constituency also appears to have polarized the vote between the two major parties; neither of the independents running won his election bid.

The traditionally moderate socialist DLP, modeled after the British Labor Party, can be expected to provide political stability and a moderate government friendly to the United States. Free enterprise will be stressed, although it may be subjected to increased control by the state.

Security system

Barbados possesses no active military units. The security forces consist of the 220-man reserve Barbados Regiment and the 680-man Barbados Police Force. The regiment is officially assigned the mission of preserving the territorial integrity and internal security of the country. As part of its assigned mission, the regiment is tasked with backing up the police in protecting internal security.

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SUBVERSION

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IV. SUBVERSION

There is no organized Communist party, and only a few extreme leftists are active. The small People's Progressive Movement (PPM), organized by radical leftists in 1966, has espoused a mixture of Cuban- and Peking-oriented Marxism and black-power doctrine, attempting to relate racial issues to political and economic frustrations of the lower classes. Although the PPM has actively propagandized the lower classes and has some followers among radical students of the University Student Action Front at the Barbados branch of the University of the West Indies, it does not pose a significant security threat at present or in the foreseeable future. The PPM has been relatively quiescent since October 1970 when PPM leader Bobby Clarke was fined for violating a section of the Barbadian Public Order Act promulgated five months earlier which prohibited public statements that could incite to kill.

The PPM has maintained contact with Guyanese pro-Communist Cheddi Jagan. PPM membership is estimated to be less than 50. There is no evidence that either the PPM or the University Student Action Front has broad popular support. Indeed, the students seem to have alienated the overwhelming majority of the population by their rowdy and disruptive behavior at rallies.

The current power struggle under way within the PPM may have been partly responsible for its failure to win a seat in the September election. The two main protagonists in the struggle are Calvin Alleyne, purporting to be party secretary and Bobby Clarke who is considered the spokesman of the PPM.

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ARMED FORCES

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VI. ARMED FORCES

Barbados possesses no active military units. The security forces consist of the 220-man reserve Barbados Regiment and the 680-man Barbados Police Force. The regiment is officially assigned the mission of preserving the territorial integrity and internal security of the country. As part of its assigned mission, the regiment is tasked with assisting the police in their internal security mission. The regiment has no military capability, however, and its functions are largely ceremonial. The unit has not been called out officially for emergency duty since 1956, when, after a severe hurricane it was mobilized to prevent looting of relief supplies. Its commander has stated that if the unit were called to duty in times of stress, it would be assigned to back up the police in such security functions as guarding special areas and buildings.

The Barbados Police Force, which has an authorized strength of 800, is headed by Commissioner of Police Wilfred Farmer. The force has six operating divisions, two of which are located in the interior. The police are well-trained, disciplined, and loyal, and they probably could be relied upon to support the government in the event of serious civil disturbances. [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] Should widespread rioting develop, however, the security forces would be hard pressed. Riot control and small arms stocks are limited and would be quickly depleted in the event of prolonged disturbances.

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FOREIGN
RELATIONS

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VII. FOREIGN RELATIONS

Barbados' diplomatic activity has been mostly confined to various international organizations. The island is an independent member of the British Commonwealth of Nations and participates in all Commonwealth activities. Barbados applied for membership in the United Nations after achieving its independence and was admitted in December 1966. Barrow has taken steps to orient Barbados away from the United Kingdom and toward Canada, the United States and the West Indies. This changing orientation is exemplified by the admission of Barbados to the OAS in October 1967 and by the government's efforts to promote regional economic cooperation in the Caribbean. But Barbados has only a limited interest in and knowledge of Latin American problems; its decision to join the OAS was prompted by a desire to obtain access to financing from the Inter-American Development Bank.

In the United Nations, Barbados has voted with the nonaligned nations on racial and colonial questions, in which it has a special interest.

Barrow has displayed an awareness of the sensitivities of the United States about contacts with Cuba. Barbados has no diplomatic missions in South America, and there are no indications that Barrow plans to expand his country's diplomatic relations. Although Barrow is favorably disposed toward the United States and has visited this country several times, he avoids overidentification with the United States. In early July 1971 he lashed out at the United States and Great Britain for "meddling in the internal affairs of Barbados." This unusual outburst was originally attributed to election jitters, but subsequent information indicates it was a deliberate effort to discredit opposition leader St. John.

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VIII. US INTERESTS

US private investment in Barbados, which totals more than \$10 million and may be as high as \$15 million, is primarily in hotels, banking, and light manufacturing. US tourists also contribute significantly to the government's revenue. Permanent US residents in the area number about 2,500, who are augmented from December to April by some 5,000 US winter visitors.

The US has given Barbados less than \$1 million in foreign aid grants. Barbados does not presently receive any direct economic assistance from the United States, but the US has contributed foodstuffs and transportation costs to a school lunch project being carried out on the island by the World Food Program. The United States also supports projects of international organizations, such as the UN Fisheries Project, which benefits Barbados. Although a member of the OAS, Barbados has not signed the Rio de Janeiro Reciprocal Assistance Treaty. The US maintains a naval facility on Barbados which operates an Oceanographic Research Station. The US Environmental Sciences Services Administration (Weather Bureau) participates in a joint meteorological station project with the Government of Barbados.

Despite recent agitation against foreign investment by black power militants elsewhere in the Caribbean, thus far this problem has been muted in Barbados.

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T A B L E S

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IX. CHRONOLOGY AND TABULAR DATA

Chronology of key events

1536	Portuguese discover Barbados.
1627	British establish permanent colony.
1639	House of Assembly is established.
1834	Slaves are emancipated.
1885	A separate colonial government apart from the Windward Islands is granted Barbados.
1938	Barbados Labor Party (BLP) is established.
1954	Sir Grantley Adams becomes first Premier of Barbados.
1955	Democratic Labor Party (DLP) is founded.
1958	(January) Barbados joins the West Indies Federation.
1961	(October) Full internal self-government is achieved. (December) DLP wins 14 of 24 Assembly seats; Errol W. Barrow becomes Prime Minister.
1962	(May) Barbados withdraws from the federation.
1966	(November) Barbados becomes independent member of the Commonwealth on 30 November. General elections are won by the DLP, holding its 14 Assembly seats.
1967	(October) Barbados is admitted to the OAS.
1971	(9 September) General elections are won by the DLP, with 18 of the 24 Assembly seats.

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TABULAR DATA**Holidays and Significant Dates**

1 January	New Year's Day
	Good Friday
	Easter Monday
1 May	May Day
	Whit Monday
August	(1st Monday) Emancipation Day
October	(1st Monday) Bank Holiday
30 November	Independence Day
25 December	Christmas Day
26 December	Boxing Day

Selected Factual Data**LAND**

166 sq. mi.; 60% cropped, 10% permanent meadows, 30% built on, waste, other (1960)
Limits of territorial waters: 3 n.m.

PEOPLE

Population: 253,000; average annual growth rate 0.8% (FY69); males 15-49, 63,000; 45,000 fit for military service
Ethnic divisions: 80% African, 15% mixed, 5% European
Religion: Anglican, Roman Catholic, Methodist, and Moravian
Language: English
Literacy: more than 90%
Labor force: 60,000 wage and salary earners
Organized labor: 19,300 (32%)
Time zone: EST + 1 (GMT -4)

GOVERNMENT

Type of government: Independent state within Commonwealth
Capital: Bridgetown
Branches: legislature consisting of a 21-member appointed Senate and a 24-member elected House of Assembly; cabinet headed by Prime Minister; judiciary (Supreme Court)

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Government leader: Prime Minister Errol Barrow
Governmental succession: If the prime minister dies during his term of office, a successor is elected from within his party's parliamentary bloc
Political subdivisions: 11 parishes administered by 3 district councils
Political parties and leaders: Democratic Labor Party (DLP), Errol Barrow; Barbados Labor Party (BLP), J.M.G. "Tom" Adams.
Voting strength (1966 election): DLP, 49.5%; BNP, 10.1%; BLP, 32.7%; Independent, 7.7%
Next national election: by December 1971
Suffrage: universal over age 18
Member of: CARIFTA, ICAO, OAS, UN

ECONOMY

GDP: \$116.8 million (1969 est.), \$450 per capita; real growth rate 1969, 3.3%
Agriculture: main products—sugar, subsistence foods, fish
Major industries: tourism, oil refining, edible oils and fats
Electric power: 39,950 kw. capacity (1969 est.); 143.7 million kw.-hr. produced (1969 est.); 595 kw.-hr. per capita
Exports: \$35.9 million (f.o.b., 1970); sugar, molasses, rum
Imports: \$107.6 million (c.i.f., 1970); foodstuffs, lumber, machinery, manufactured goods
Major trade partners: UK 33%; US 21%, Commonwealth Caribbean countries 13%, Canada 11% (1968)
Foreign aid: economic—extensions from US (FY 67-69), \$0.1 million in grants; from international organizations (FY 63-69), \$0.6 million
Monetary conversion rate: 2.00 East Caribbean Dollars equals US\$1
Fiscal year: 1 April - 31 March
Railroads: None
Highways: 950 mi.; 800 mi. paved, 100 mi. gravel, 50 mi. improved earth
Inland waterways: None
Ports: 1 principal (Bridgetown), 2 minor
Civil air: no major transport aircraft
Airfields: 1 with permanent-surface runway 8,000-11,999 ft.; 1 sea-plane station
Telecommunications: Island-wide automatic telephone system with 25,000 telephones; key international traffic transit center for Caribbean area; tropospheric scatter links to Trinidad and St. Lucia; 86,000 radio and 14,000 TV sets, 2 AM and 1 TV stations; 2 telegraph submarine cables

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DEFENSE FORCES

Local security forces: Barbados regiment 325; Royal Barbados Police Force 680

Major ground units: 1 reserve regiment (Hq. company, 2 rifle companies)

Supply: Obtained primarily from the US; some ammunition from Belgium

National Intelligence Survey (NIS) Material

The following sections of the NIS are relevant:

NIS 81E (GS) Oct 69

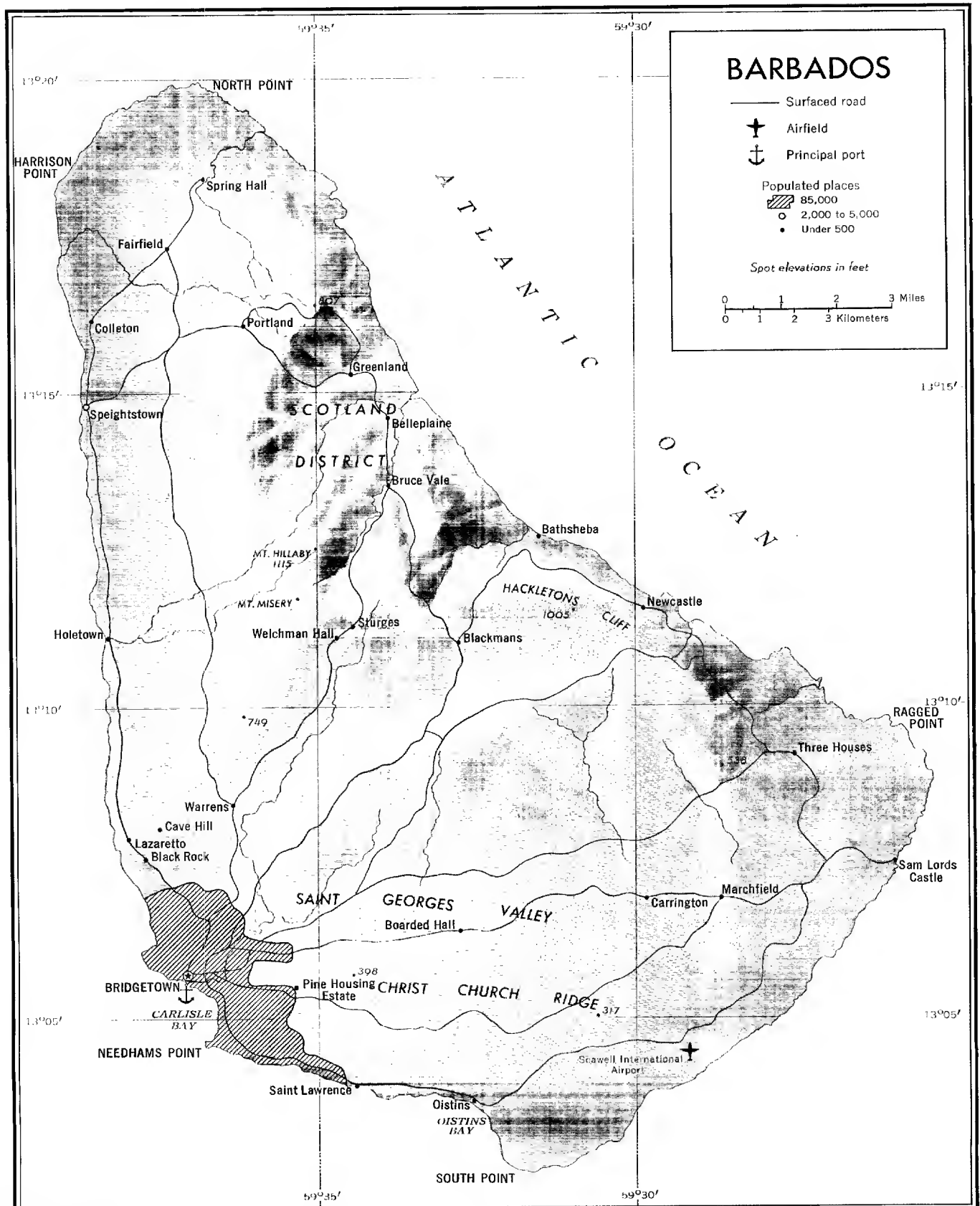
There are no specialized sections.

MAP

The best available general reference map is contained in the NIS General Survey. CIA Map Library No. 76961, 9-69

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